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Rapporteur: Albin **Otruba** (Slovakia)

Addendum

Use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice

1. At its 7th and 8th meetings, on 21 May 2015, the Commission considered agenda item 6, entitled "Use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice". For its consideration of the item, the Commission had before it the following:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on capital punishment and implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty (E/2015/49);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on use and application of United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice (E/CN.15/2015/8 and Corr.1);

(c) Note by the Secretariat transmitting the report of the Secretary-General on capital punishment and implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty (E/CN.15/2015/9);

(d) Report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the open-ended intergovernmental expert group on gender-related killing of women and girls (E/CN.15/2015/16);

(e) Report of the Secretary-General on the outcome of the meeting of the Expert Group on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 2 to 5 March 2015 (E/CN.15/2015/17);

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(f) Reply by the United States of America to the ninth survey on capital punishment and on the implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of the rights of those facing the death penalty, covering the period 2009-2013 (Sections 3 and 4) (E/CN.15/2015/CRP.3).

2. The Director of the Division for Operations of UNODC made an introductory statement. A statement was made by the observer for Latvia (on behalf of the European Union and Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Ukraine). Statements were made by the representatives of Germany, Brazil, Thailand, Canada, Switzerland, Norway, the United States, the Republic of Korea, Indonesia and China. Statements were also made by the observers for Romania, Algeria, the Netherlands, South Africa and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

3. Statements were also made by the observers for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Penal Reform International and the Friends World Committee for Consultation.

Deliberations

4. Speakers emphasized the value of the United Nations standards and norms in crime prevention and criminal justice as benchmarks for an efficient administration of justice grounded in human rights. They informed the Commission about recent criminal justice reform initiatives undertaken in their countries, in many cases with the support and assistance of UNODC.

5. Speakers welcomed as an historic achievement the completion of the work of the Expert Group on the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and supported the endorsement by the Commission and subsequent adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Mandela Rules). They stressed that the revised Rules would better safeguard the human rights and dignity of prisoners, referring in particular to the rules on protection against torture, and on prison health care, searches and disciplinary measures. Many speakers emphasized the need for prison reform, also stressing the importance of reducing recidivism through social reintegration and rehabilitation, especially for young offenders.

6. Many speakers welcomed the overall trend towards abolition or restriction of the use of capital punishment, as reflected in the report of the Secretary-General on capital punishment and implementation of the safeguards guaranteeing protection of rights of those facing the death penalty (E/2015/49). Concern was expressed, however, that the death penalty continued to be applied in a number of countries and in some cases without due consideration of the safeguards, including those concerning the limitation of capital punishment to the "most serious crimes" and the protection of vulnerable members of society. While several speakers supported the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, for action by the Economic and Social Council, a view was expressed that the national context did not allow for the abolition of capital punishment and that the impact on victims and their families should be considered. Several speakers highlighted national efforts to restrict the use of the death penalty.

7. The primary importance of preventing and addressing violence, especially against women and girls and against children, was stressed, and the work of UNODC in that area was commended. Speakers welcomed the recommendations of the open-ended intergovernmental expert group on gender-related killing of women and girls, which provided useful guidance for national authorities.